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05/05/06 - Posted from the Daily Record newsroom

## EPA probes former Morristown cleaner

### DAILY RECORD STAFF REPORTS

MORRISTOWN --The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is investigating whether vapors from dry cleaning chemicals that seeped into the ground and groundwater below the former VIP Cleaners facility are entering homes or businesses in the area.

The EPA has taken samples beneath several businesses that now operate in the former dry cleaner's building, located at 89 Morris St., inside nearby businesses and under basements of nearby homes.

The agency expects results within the next month.

"Problems like this are unfortunately all too common, which is why we have initiated an assessment of facilities where vapors from volatile chemicals could be entering homes or workplaces," said EPA Regional Administrator Alan J. Steinberg. "The good news is, once we identify the problem, it's relatively straightforward to fix. We can install ventilation systems when necessary to get rid of trapped fumes."

Dry cleaners use chemicals in their processes known as volatile organic compounds, the agency said. Compounds include tetrachloroethylene (PCE), which can break down to trichloroethylene (TCE) and 1,2-dichloroethylene (DCE).

In November 2005, EPA confirmed these chemicals were in the groundwater under the buildings and

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determined that the chemicals were not affecting drinking water.

In order to assess the potential for vapors getting into buildings, EPA will install monitoring equipment in nine residential buildings and 21 commercial buildings to measure the levels of gases in the ground below the basement floors. That will help determine whether contamination from the ground water and in the soil is at levels of concern and could affect indoor air.

The agency also will sample the indoor air in the VIP facility to determine if there is an existing vapor intrusion issue.

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